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ABSTRACT

Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) was established as an autonomous state university in 1969, with the merger of the Indiana University and Purdue University branch campuses in Indianapolis. There are 19 schools providing graduate education on the campus, including Liberal Arts, in which communication studies is situated. This paper articulates the demands established at the state, institutional, and disciplinary levels, and explains how the missions and objectives of the pending Master of Arts (M.A.) proposal in applied communication meet those demands. The paper explains that the master's proposal builds upon the undergraduate program and compatibly fills the need for a yet higher level of communication study at IUPUI and its surrounding community. It outlines the degree requirements, covers core courses for general applied communication, and gives optional concentrations. The paper also cites five program objectives. It then discusses applied communication and the discipline. (NKA)

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Mission and Objectives of IUPUI'S Graduate Program

In

Applied Communication

By

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R C Dick

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It's a truism that any graduate proposal has numerous academic, political, economic, and social hurdles to clear before its ultimate approval and implementation. The structure and location of Indiana University Purdue University at indianapolis (IUPUI) seemingly present even more such challenges than at most institutions. Yet, the final product promises to be unique, exciting and easily worth the struggle.

My task today will be to articulate the demands established at the state, institutional, and disciplinary levels, and explain how the missions and objectives of our pending M.A. proposal in applied communication meet those demands.

IUPUI

Let us begin by describing the institution itself. IUPUI was established as an autonomous state university in 1969, with the merger of Indiana University and Purdue University branch campuses in Indianapolis. Being the state's only urban public secondary institution, it now features the largest number of programs offering degrees, with science, engineering, and technology areas evolving from Purdue, and carrying the Purdue name; and arts and humanities areas evolving from IU carrying IU nomenclature.

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The IUPUI home page specifies that the campus is "the center for graduate professional education." There are nineteen schools providing graduate education on the campus, among which are Medicine, Nursing, Business, Law, Dentistry, and the like, including Liberal Arts, in which Communication Studies is situated. Altogether, the university offers 180 degree programs from what it asserts is "an energized urban campus in a major metropolitan area (2,000)." Currently enrolled are 27,587 students from 46 states and 115 countries.

TRUSTEES' AND COMMISSION'S PERSPECTIVES

Because of its location and unique resources, the IU Systemwide Board of Trustees has affirmed an academic mission for this urban campus as it relates to the counterpart institution to its South. In January 1994, that Board of Trustees reaffirmed "the complementarity of Bloomington and Indianapolis as core campuses of the University, {recognizing the} key metropolitan role of the Indianapolis campus with a broad range of academic programs in the state's capital and largest city (Graduate Programs at IUPUI, 1995)." Preceding that statement of the Trustees was one by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the agency with final decision-making power for all new program proposals. In December 1993, the ICHE confirmed that IUPUI was "Indiana's principal provider of graduate professional education [and] selected graduate programs to support health education and meet city and regional needs (Graduate Programs at IUPUI, 1995)."

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We confidently submit, then, that the University's Administration and the State Commission have both acknowledged that "IUPUI must support the educational, social, and economic attainment of the state's largest population center. Accordingly degree programs reflect the needs of the community, including employers who must provide for the continuing education of their workforce at the graduate level. The most important concentration of post-baccalaureate programs is in health-related activities, including degrees in traditional disciplines that have been oriented toward health issues (Graduate Programs at IUPUI, 1995)"

IU AND IUPUI MISSIONS

With that understanding of the Trustees' and Commission's perceptions of campus' role in the State, forthwith are ways in which our proposal for a master's degree in applied communication is adapted to Indiana University's self-defined overall mission. In anticipation of our graduate proposal, the Department of Communication Studies, during 1996-97, conducted a self-evaluation of our undergraduate program, an effort that culminated in a formal assessment. This was part of the "regular cycle of assessment," which had been established the preceding year as part of the University's Strategic directions charter (1996b). In our assessment process, we demonstrated the effectiveness and compatibility of our newly altered undergraduate curriculum with the missions and goals of Indiana University in general and IUPUI in particular.

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Our master's proposal builds upon that undergraduate program and compatibly fills the need for a yet higher level of communication study at IUPUI and its surrounding community.

Just as our undergraduate program had involved regular adaptation and change, as reflected in our self-evaluation, our graduate proposal reflects that major feature of the statewide mission as articulated by IU's President Brand in the preface to the Strategic directions charter(1996b): "Our destination has always required progressive change as the needs of our students, the expectation of society, and the context and boundaries of intellectual and professional disciplines have changed."

President Brand in the CHARTER also presaged the appropriateness of the distinct applied graduate communication program we propose for Indianapolis, when he wrote: "The word University recognizes IU's one university, consisting of multiple campuses with distinctive but complementary missions. Together the distinctive missions of the campuses enable the university to serve the state and nation as well (1996b)." The agencies, businesses, corporations, hospitals, and other profit and non-profit institutions in the Indianapolis area are organizational contexts in which graduate applied communication education, including the use of contemporary mediated innovations, is distinct and needed.

That applied focus on the needs of this urban community, gives the program complementarity with the Purdue curriculum as well and this is a built-in requirement in the Indianapolis campus' policies. In a statement to the Trustees, the IU administration noted: "Consistent with its mission, IUPUI has observed two principles in

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developing new arts and science graduate degrees: (1) demand must be substantial and cannot be met either by delivering courses from IUB [IU Bloomington] or PUWL [Purdue West Lafayette]; and (2) programs must have an emphasis which both differentiates the degree from existing programs at IUB or PUWL and relates to the metropolitan region or unique university assets (Graduate Programs at IUPUI, 1995)." Unlike our focus on applied communication in this urban community, our closest neighbor, some sixty miles South, is adapting in yet a different way; the IUB Department of Speech Communication has joined with colleagues in film and media studies to form the new Department of Communication and Culture.

Moreover, the design of our program recognizes and undergirds the IUPUI mission set forth in Strategic directions for IU and IUPUI: Mission, vision, values, aspirations, goals, and strategic initiatives. In that document, IUPUI vowed to "serve as a model for collaboration and interdisciplinary work through partnerships with . . . the community, drawing upon the distinctive strengths of the academic health, science center on the Indianapolis campus and the resources of the capital city and state (1996a, p.2)."

CURRICULAR OUTLINE

Our graduate proposal in applied communication involves (1) a more general curriculum in applied communication, especially for secondary teachers, graduate students wanting a less career-specific degree, and (2) concentrations in those academic areas of applied

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communication for which our campus and city provide even more unique opportunities.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

1. 33 credit hours for the non thesis route or 30 credit hours for the thesis route, i.e. 24 credit hours coursework plus six for thesis.
2. Core requirements of nine credit hours:
   Communication Theory
   Applied Communication Research
   Applied Learning Project or Thesis
3. In addition to the core requirements, the graduate enrollee will complete the remainder of required credits from the following general curriculum or from one of the three optional concentrations.

GENERAL APPLIED COMMUNICATION

1. The 9 or 12 credit hour core requirement for the degree (Communication Theory, Applied Communication Research, Applied Learning Project or Thesis), plus
2. 18 credits from the following applied communication courses (15 if completing a 6 credit thesis):
   *Advanced Communication Criticism
   *Advanced Family Communication
   *Advanced Intercultural Communication
   *Advanced Organizational Communication
   *Advanced Public Communication
   *Communication and Conflict
   *Computer Mediated Communication
   *Group Communication in Organizations

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*Health Communication
*Health Provider-Consumer Communication
*Media Criticism
*Media Strategies for Professionals
*Relational Communication

*Internship: Note: Internship opportunities will be made available to all M.A. students. The internship is optional and available for up to 3 credit hours only
*Independent Study
*Topics/Seminar in Applied Communication

3. Final Written Examination

4. 6 credits mandatory outside interdisciplinary electives

OPTIONAL CONCENTRATIONS

*All concentrations require completion of the 9 or 12 hours core requirement for the degree (Communication Theory, Applied Communication Research, Applied Learning Project or Thesis)

1. Applied Corporate Communication
Courses required--
*Advanced Organizational Communication
*Advanced Public Communication
*Group Communication in Organizations
*Graduate coursework in SLA (3 credits) from approved list
*Graduate coursework (3 credits) in one of the following Schools: Allied Health, Business School, SPEA
*Elective coursework (6-9 credits) in departmental applied communication

2. Applied Health Communication
Courses required--
*Advanced Family Communication
*Health Communication
*Health Provider-Consumer Communication
*Graduate study (3 credits) in SLA Medical Humanities Group

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*Graduate study (3 credits) in one of the following schools: Allied Health, Nursing or SPEA
*Elective coursework (6-9 credits) in departmental applied communication

3. Applied Media Criticism/Management
Courses required--
*Media Criticism
*Media Strategies for Professionals
*Graduate study in SLA (3 credits) from approved list
*Graduate study (3 credits) in one of the following schools: Business, Journalism, New Media, SPEA
* Elective coursework (9-12 credits) in departmental applied communication.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Following are the five major objectives of the program outlined above.

Objective 1. Our program will offer residents graduate work in applied communication at the only public university in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. In this immediate location is the preponderance of the State's organizations featuring applied communication professionals in such areas as personnel training, human resource management, public relations, advertising, and communications department managers.

Objective 2. The curriculum is designed to meet the ongoing needs for advanced study in applied communication by professional administrators. Even those long established in their positions must

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maintain a grasp on this constantly evolving and developing discipline, including the revolutionary changes imposed by the technological communicative refinements and contributions. Scheduling is adapted so those who currently are employed can obtain graduate degrees by on a part-time basis, assimilating and generating new theory and, when appropriate, incorporating changes precipitated in use of mediated communication.

IUB has no program in applied or organizational communication. While Purdue does have a graduate program in organizational communication, a commute practically would be prohibitive for students pursuing graduate degrees, especially those who have employment, family commitments, and other such obligations in Indianapolis. Moreover, with the corporate community primarily in Indianapolis, the existence of the applied communication academic program here as well is clearly advantageous logistically.

Objective 3. By having a large campus in the urban community, the program can contribute to as well as draw upon both the campus and the surrounding community. The Applied Health Communication Concentration, in cooperation with the School of Medicine, addresses the communicative needs of future medical practitioners and health care providers at various levels and capacities. Under the catalytic umbrella of applied communication, the plans of study for students in the program incorporate coursework from such related areas as Medical Humanities, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Journalism, Business, and New Media.

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In short, our graduate program draws upon the "distinctive strengths of the Indianapolis campus and resources of the capital city," while addressing their needs at the same time.

Objective 4. An added objective, for which the "General Applied Communication" portion of the curriculum is especially fit, is that Indianapolis communication teachers and academic administrators will be able to take bona fide graduate communication classes on the IUPUI campus. Currently, IPS teachers must take undergraduate courses for which special work is incorporated so graduate credit in Education can be assigned, but the opportunity for shared study at the graduate level would be an invaluable feature.

Objective 5. Finally, this graduate program would provide a firm basis for those students who decide to advance to doctoral study. Of course, many of those pursuing the Applied Health Communication Concentration will already be doctoral students in medicine. Yet, those other students in the program who wish to continue for a Ph.D. in Communication will be well-prepared to do so.

APPLIED COMMUNICATION AND THE DISCIPLINE

During recent years, special interest groups and journals in our field have been devoted to the subject of applied communication. Hypothetically, there is a continuum with theory and the generation of theory at one end and praxis and service on the other. Our proposal gives stress to the practical end, with a focus on communication in situ. While fulfilling a vital function in the

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community, the program promises to continue contributing to theoretical knowledge in its research. In the earlier stages of applied communication as a distinct area of study, McCroskey (1979) saw it as a "shift from a single-minded emphasis on research and theory generation to one which recognizes the importance of knowledge generation and the application of that knowledge (p. 353)." Subsequently, others have said that, "although applied research may well advance questions about theory and methodology posed by communication scholars from within the discipline, the primary purpose of applied communication research is to use theory and methodology in order to understand how communication works within particular settings and solves specific problems (O'Hair, Kreps, & Frey, 1990, p. 3).

Our proposed program focuses on practice, problems and requirements of application. At the same time, it retains the theoretical edge, contributing intellectual depth, rigor and insight. To use the phrase of Julia Wood (1995), applied communication can entail theorizing practice and practicing theory. In the final analysis, our program's defining features are not unlike those given by Seibold (2000) to applied communication scholarship in general; they are to be found "less in its outline and more in its emphasis: The recursivity to theory and practice, the audiences to whom scholarship is addressed, and the utility of the work for ameliorating communication-related problems (p.184)."

At his point, our M.A. proposal in Applied Communication is prepared, especially to meet the needs of the IUPUI campus and the Indianapolis community. We anxiously await its implementation.

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